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ABSTRACT

Contrary to the usual design of curriculum materials, those of the Hawaii English Program (H.E.P.) are not handbooks for teachers. The H.E.P. materials--literature, in this case--consist of booklets for students who thus bear the responsibility for setting their own pace according to their interests, needs, and abilities. The total classroom curriculum package contains basic sets of materials, a series of instructional games which teach literary definitions and writing skills, a kit of graduated writing tasks for more direct writing practice, and a teacher's manual. In the H.E.P. classroom, groups of students are involved with various sets of materials, while the teacher is free to circulate, giving guidance wherever necessary. Student reaction to H.E.P., dependent on both materials and teachers, has been encouragingly positive, as evidenced by objective questionnaires and written evaluations. Only the activities and reading which survive extensive testing and evaluation of content and processes have been approved for final H.E.P. production. (JM)

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Curriculum Materials in the Hawaii English Program

If you were to seek out an extensive sampling of teachers from all grade levels--elementary, secondary, college--and ask these educators to define "curriculum materials," what type of response might you expect? Perhaps 99% of the instructors would describe a teaching manual. Typical curriculum materials, they would tell you, are guide books containing such information as: instructions on introducing assigned readings to a class, suggestions for discussions, lists of composition topics, and possibilities for further reading.

This description would be an accurate one, for the curriculum materials with which most teachers are familiar consist largely of written texts--often of formidable length, complexity, and impracticality--intended to give the teacher hints on how to lead a class through certain areas of study.

However, in the Hawaii English Program, a project of the Hawaii Curriculum Center,* the term "curriculum materials" has a far different and more comprehensive meaning. It is not limited to a handbook for the teacher. H.E.P. curriculum materials are designed to be put into the hands of the students so that they can teach themselves at their own pace and according to their own interests, needs and abilities. These curriculum materials relieve the teacher from the strain and pressure of a nearly impossible task: attempting to engage all of the individuals in a class simultaneously in one topic. H.E.P. students are given the responsibility--and the concomitant

*The Hawaii Curriculum Center is a joint undertaking of the State of Hawaii and the University of Hawaii. When completed, the Secondary English Program will consist of three sub-programs: Literature, Language Systems, and Language Skills. The examples in this paper are from the Literature sub-program.

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pleasure--of determining which of the curricular offerings each wishes to engage in.

At this point, you may be asking some of the same questions which we at the Hawaii Curriculum Center hear from visiting educators:

1. What, precisely, are these curriculum materials with which the students are working?
2. What is an H.E.P. classroom like?
3. How do young people react to, in effect, teaching themselves rather than being taught to?

1. The curriculum materials comprise a complete instructional package. In the intermediate school phase of the secondary literature program, this package consists principally of 36 sets (termed sub-units) of thematically interrelated items. (See Chart.) Each set includes some or all of the following:

--student instruction pamphlets
--reading selections: both commercial texts and H.E.P. edited booklets
--a photo essay
--polaroid camera and film
--literary board game, card game, or puzzle
--puppet kit
--cassettes related to reading selections
--blank cassettes for student use as suggested in the instruction pamphlets
--consumables such as newspaper mock-up materials and illustrated strips for which students supply dialogue
--record album
--filmstrip
--film

In addition to these basic sets of materials, the total classroom curriculum package contains a series of instructional games devised to teach skills and supply types of information that English instructors are generally forced to present in dreary drills.

Literary definitions are taught through the game MISHAP, an acronym for the terms students learn to identify: metaphor, irony, simile, hyperbole, allusion, and personification.

Forming a continuum of increasing sophistication, four other games focus on writing skills:

1. Students practice punctuation when playing SIGNALS, a board game which coincidentally produces familiarity with traffic rules and symbols.

2. The LANGUAGE MARKET is an exciting simulation stock market game in which students attempt to recognize and dispose of worthless stock (faulty sentences) and corner the market on genuine certificates (correct sentences).

3. BLUEPRINT RUMMY is a card game designed to teach paragraphing. In playing hands of BLUEPRINT RUMMY, students learn to identify types of sentences which make effective paragraph introductions or conclusions; to arrange ideas within a paragraph in their most logical sequence; and to reject sentences which are superficially but not actually pertinent. Indirectly, players acquire recognition of helpful transitional phrases.

BLUEPRINT RUMMY is produced in two versions, one for students with minimal composition skills, the other for those who need and enjoy challenge.

4. TARGET tests student proficiency in recognizing larger and more abstract composition concepts. An archery type target is depicted on the game board, with the bull's-eye representing the main idea of an essay, and the outer concentric rings representing other topics in the same essay. Players don't use arrows, however! They are dealt cards which must be played in their proper place on the target and also in the proper sequence for developing an essay on a particular theme.

In both TARGET and BLUEPRINT RUMMY, as in many Hawaii English Program activities, students who become especially adept at the game are encouraged

to develop their own form of it.

For the youngster who needs more direct and systematic guidance or practice in writing skills, the program includes a COMP KIT containing a series of 18 graduated writing tasks. These are arranged in sequence not only from simple to complex but also from the subjective (writing about self) to the objective (writing an expository essay).

2. The question, "What is an H.E.P. classroom like?" can best be answered through a hypothetical visit to one of the Honolulu schools in which the project does its pilot testing.

A layman observing a secondary literature session would probably be struck at first by its non-traditional semblance, the many activities being carried on at one time, and the buzz of voices: "Why are those youngsters scattered in bunches about the room? Why isn't the teacher keeping them quiet? And why is the teacher just talking with certain students and not lecturing to the entire class?"

The professional educator, however, recognizes a pattern under the sometimes apparent chaos; he sees an open classroom in action. Each group of students is absorbed in a separate set of materials--and there is no grumbling about assignments as every youngster has chosen both his peer group and his work. The sound one hears is that of productive activity--indeed, of excited involvement. And the teacher is free to give individual guidance to those with special requirements, and to circulate from group to group, participating wherever he or she feels most needed at a particular moment.

At the beginning of a semester, after the organization of the program is explained to students, they are given time to browse through the literature, discuss the unit themes with their teacher and peers with whom they

might like to work, and to check the instruction booklets. These pamphlets are the key items in each sub-unit package; they describe the readings, activities, and the options provided. An emphasis on student choice is basic in the literature program. The young person's decision-making process is called into play not only when he selects a sub-unit, but also as he proceeds through it. Because the student instruction booklets also indicate the number of classmates who can operate effectively together on a particular sub-unit, students are encouraged to interact with peers by forming a working group. Some sub-units are intended for pairs of students, some for clusters of four or more, and some, emphasizing the contemplative mood, for individual work.

Once the initial groups are formed and begin their activities, the class becomes a vital entity, flowing along from day to day without pressure from the teacher. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of an H.E.P. literature class is that the students, on entering the room, immediately join their current group and plunge into the activities not completed at the preceding session.

A major and essential feature of the Hawaii English Program literature classroom is that placing the instruction booklet into the hands of the students gives them the responsibility for directing and channeling their own educational experience. The program is thus both learner-oriented and learner-directed.

3. How do young people respond to this system?

Student reaction to H.E.P. methods and content is dependent, of course, not only on the program but on its teachers: how thoroughly they have prepared and become familiar with the interrelationships between various literary selections and activities; how they introduce the new format during the opening days of a semester; how comfortable they feel in a non-authoritarian role.

The Hawaii Curriculum Center has been fortunate in obtaining dedicated instructors for the crucial phase of testing the prototype materials. Consequently, the students' response, as gauged by their continuous involvement during English periods, is encouragingly strong.

More objective evidence is likewise encouraging: of 168 evaluation questionnaires tabulated from one period in the initial cycle of testing, 154 or 92% indicated that the student would like to continue working in an H.E.P. group.

It is significant also that one class from the 1973 pilot group of 7th graders was given the option of continuing with the experimental materials as 8th graders and voted overwhelmingly to do so.

But let some of the youngsters speak for themselves in these excerpts from a heterogeneous 7th grade group in an urban district:

> The H.E.P. work helped me in reading and to understand a book better by making the project fun. It made you think back to the story. I feel better in H.E.P. because you are on your own to get your grade.
>
> The program was a lot different from the regular english program. For 1 thing we did most things on our own such as reading, doing art activities, playing games and even putting on plays. The program was better than english because we covered more things that we want to do. I would rather have a choice of doing something than having no word at all about what I want to do.
>
> H.E.P. teaches you skills in reading and writing by doing activities, and it also teaches you other things like how to get along when working in groups with other people.
>
> I prefer HEP because it gives us a choice to choose what we want to do, who we want to work with. It lets us do work without the teachers supervision making us feel good that we are considered old enough to do things by ourselves.
>
> I learned how to write book reviews and news articles and I got to experience a book like, "Johnathan Livingston Seagull," really making me wonder what my goal in life is. Even the poetry part was good because I could express my own feelings about flight.

> HEP helped me learn to work with people and helped me learn to read better and remember what I read by doing a project.

The next three quotations allude to gaming as a learning device. Like the majority of the respondents, the first youngster expresses only her positive feelings on the subject. The other two add knowing comments about the relationship between the games and the literature. Each was answering the question, "Which activity did you like best?"

> The card game. Because its fun and I could go on forever.

> I liked it because the game was fun to play. It was a test of how well you read the book selections. If you didn't read the book selections well you would probably lose the game.

> I liked the one where you played with PLOTTER cards & its steps. It was fun, also you have to know your stories to play it.

The student who wrote the following is learning English as a second language.

> I really like all units it is fun reading and doing activities and working in groups and get to know more other guys by working together and learn to read and learn more about the characters background.

A bit of intriguing insight came from a student of whom the teacher wrote, "This child hates school. He wouldn't come if he didn't have to."

> I think with some improve ements it will encarge kids to do more work cause they don't have a teacher bossing over you. I think teachers think there kings over use kids!! And if you boss, the kid is going to fight back and at the end the kid don't learn any thing and the teacher will have a Nevis brake down.

Occasionally, a remark which a student intends as negative will be received by teachers and planners as positive.

> It's good in a way because it gives you a chance to rebuild your reading skills and also it gives you a chance to read some of the books you haven't read and gives you a chance to know what kind of stories that author writes. <u>It's not so good because you have to do a lot of writing and discussing and then you have to evaluate the story and the things you did with the story</u>.

> H.E.P. was too much of an activity, planned for learning life's values, what the meaning of freedom is, or what you'll want to be in life.

Sometimes comments are more caustic. When a youngster says, "This one is junk!" the item concerned is flagged for reconsideration and possible revamping. The planners, who accept such stern student judgment very seriously, do not, of course, expect every youngster to be as enthusiastic as the one who wrote "I love H.E.P.!" We would be satisfied if all could agree with the young person who said, "I haven't had one sub-unit that was dull enough to put you to sleep yet."

Throughout this description there have been several references to classroom testing. The Hawaii English Program is perhaps unique in the degree to which its curriculum content and processes undergo realistic trialling and subsequent evaluation. Prototypes must withstand the combined critiques of students, teachers, and curriculum planners. At the conclusion of a testing cycle, all items are returned to the Hawaii Curriculum Center, after which planners and media specialists incorporate necessary changes, and then send the revisions back into the field for one or more rounds of additional testing. Only those activities and readings which survive this process are approved for final production.

The Hawaii Curriculum Center <u>does</u> prepare teachers' manuals. . .which are also school tested, evaluated, and revised. But these manuals are only a small segment of our classroom instructional package--our "curriculum materials."

HAWAII ENGLISH PROJECT

INTERMEDIATE LITERATURE PROGRAM
(Non-sequential; non-graded)

Sub-unit	Unit I Diversions	Unit II Quests	Unit III Becoming	Unit IV Reflections	Unit V Perceptions	Unit VI Cross Currents
1.	Venturing Beyond	Freedom	Role Playing	Solitude	Interaction	Flight
2.	Desperate Moments	To Be Somebody	Battling Fear	The Possibility of "E"	Facing Up	Spooks & Spirits
3.	All's Well With The World	The Impossible Dream	Shades of Feeling	A Sense of Values	A Question of Brotherhood	Man & Machine
4.	Twists & Turns	A Way of Knowing	Misconceptions	A Little Matter of Self Respect	Matching Wits	Mysteries from the Past
5.	The Human Zoo	Soul Journeys	Belonging	One With Nature	Fantasy World	Those Who Remember
6.	Transformations	Breaking Away	Being Different	Looking Good	Man, the Myth Maker	They Came By Sea